



WHICH CONSOLE SHOULD YOU BUY
XBOX 1 OR PS3?

SEE OPINION PAGE 2



ACTOR PAUL WALKER DIES IN CAR
ACCIDENT SATURDAY.

SEE VALLEY LIFE PAGE 3



MONARCH WANTS TO BE FIRST TO IN
HER FAMILY TO GRADUATE COLLEGE.

SEE SPORTS PAGE 4

thevalleystar.com

December 4, 2013

Volume 79 Issue 7

SMELLS LIKE CHRISTMAS



LET IT GROW - Santa & Son's employees watering christmas trees at the tree lot located near parking lot G preparing for the holiday season.

JAHSAUDI PERKINS, PHOTO EDITOR | VALLEY STAR
See Page 3

BOOKSTORE BUYS BACK BOOKS DURING FINALS

Buyback options for textbooks are limited due to closure of off-campus store.

JORDAN UTLEY-THOMSON
STAFF WRITER

The bookstore at Valley College will soon accept buybacks from students who wish to get cash back on textbooks purchased throughout the semester.

Every first and last week of the semester, the LAVC Bookstore opens up its buyback counter and can reimburse a student up to 50 percent on their used textbooks. However, there are limitations to what the bookstore can accept.

"With buybacks, instructors turn in their orders . . . [and] if we need the book because [they] ordered it, [we buy it back] . . . [and] resell it as a used textbook," said Kasey Doe, a cashier at the bookstore. "If we've already met our quantity, then we won't buy it."

Valley partners with the Nebraska Book Company for buybacks twice each semester, thus offsetting a possible lack of demand that the school bookstore might have. This results in a decent chance that a student's book will be accepted during buyback. On the other hand, the company generally offers a cheaper return on buybacks than the bookstore, according to Doe.

The bookstore also communicates with Valley faculty in hopes of convincing them to avoid a curriculum structured around textbook bundles, as they commonly include access codes that can only be used once.

"We try to talk to the instructors and get them to use books that aren't bundles, because we can't buy the

bundled books back [that have] access codes," Doe said. "The more used books that are offered for the students, the better."

The bookstore will accept buybacks Dec. 9 to Dec. 12 from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Dec. 13 and Dec. 16 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Students will notice a lack of options this semester due to the closure of the off-campus bookstore, formerly located at 13326 Burbank Blvd. This has resulted in a local monopoly for the bookstore at Valley.

"I feel sorry for the kids at Valley. [At the] Pierce [College bookstore], they really cheat you off," said video game design major Adrian Da Costa. "They're like 'oh yeah, we'll only give you \$5 for this \$120 book', and over at the [De Soto] off-campus bookstore, they'll give you at least . . . 50 percent off from [what you spent] before - guaranteed."

A competitive alternative, once a block away, now requires a 20-minute drive or a 40-minute bus ride. Woodland Textbooks, located at 20938 Victory Blvd., is Valley's closest off-campus bookstore. One advantage they provide over Valley's bookstore is a year-round buyback policy.

However, in an age dominated by the Internet, students have a myriad of alternatives, unrestricted by physical location. Popular websites, such as Amazon and Craigslist, are commonly used for students to get the best bang for their buck regarding textbook sales. Additionally, websites like Cash4books.net and Campusbooks.com have made a niche out of the college textbook market.

"Competition is always great," Da Costa said. "It's such a drag when there's only one place to go, because then customers have zero leverage."

ASU IGNORES STUDENT NEEDS SPENDS MONEY ON SELF

NEWS ANALYSIS

Members of the ASU use students money to pay for conferences.

JHANELLE RIVERA AND
ZAINE ABOURAIA
EDITOR IN CHIEF AND OPINION EDITOR

Mandatory student representation and optional Associated Student Organization fees have paid for the 14 members of the Associated Student Union to take trips to three conven-

tions this semester, costing more than \$20,000, while students struggle to stay afloat with the rising costs of college.

Every academic year, students are charged a mandatory \$1 student representation fee, this year totaling more than \$18,000. Additionally, the ASU asks students for an optional ASU membership fee of \$10 per semester to join clubs, participate in student events or in student government, totaling \$57,936. The two fees combined for a total of \$75,936 this semester.

According to ASU Treasurer, John Reyes, the ASU spent a total of \$10,345 on a trip to Sacramento for a student government conference using money from the ASO fee. They have also spent a combination of \$11,214 on trips to Monterey Bay and New Orleans to attend the General Assembly and ASACC conferences all expenses.

"We have to write and be accountable for everything we learn every committee we go to, we have to write a paragraph with all of our notes and hand that to our advisors," said

Alexia Johnson, ASU president, referring to what they learned from these conferences. "Most of it was parliamentary procedures and we didn't know how to go about it, he came in and taught us about Robert's rules and the brown act, we learned how to have effective meetings."

ASU President Johnson stated that effective meetings help the ASU run smoother, but students cannot directly benefit from those meetings, no matter how efficient they run. While the ASU cannot pay for everything, there are other ways they

can contribute to the student body. Textbook waivers and scholarships, provided by ASU money, would aid students more than solitary trips exclusive to the ASU or buying a new costume for the mascot.

"That's where the business of transparency comes in, if they were a corporate entity or a non-profit, they would have to they would have to fork all that information out," said communication major David Margolis. "Just [make] it available online, where you had this budget you've put it towards this list of activities or operations and

where did that money go, I'm paying ten or fifteen per semester, they should have the information available."

Many students are unaware that the ASU will allow [student clubs] to fill out a budget request form to fund legitimate academic purposes, such as going to conferences and presenting research out-of-state.

"That's something I do need to do a better job of," said John Reyes, ASU treasurer. "Is getting the word out there to students that this money is available to them. That's something I need to work on a lot more."

IMPORTANT INFORMATION: FINALS SCHEDULE

Final Examination Schedule

Monday, December 9 to Sunday, December 15

- Except for classes of less-than-semester length, the LAST DAY OF REGULAR INSTRUCTION IS SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8.
- Classes meeting less-than-semester length will have the final exams at the last meeting of the class.
- FINAL EXAMINATIONS MUST BE HELD ON THE DAY AND TIME SCHEDULED AND IN REGULARLY ASSIGNED CLASSROOMS.
- FRIDAY CLASSES will have their final during the regular class meeting on December 13.
- SATURDAY CLASSES will have their final during the regular class meeting on December 14.

To use the schedule below:

- Locate the day and hour of your class on the grid.
- Days of the week are abbreviated M T W Th F for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday.

DAY CLASSES

Day and Date Of Final Exam	MONDAY DECEMBER 9			TUESDAY DECEMBER 10		
Time of Exam	6:30am - 8:30am	9:30am - 11:30am	12:30pm - 2:30pm	6:30am - 8:30am	9:30am - 11:30am	12:30pm - 2:30pm
Normal Class Schedule	6:30 – 7:55 MW	9:40 – 10:50 MTWTh	1:00 – 2:10 MTWTh	6:30 – 7:55 TTh	9:40 – 11:05 TTh	1:00 – 2:25 TTh
	6:45 – 7:55 MTWTh	9:40 – 11:05 MW	1:00 – 2:25 MW		9:40 – 10:55 TThF	1:00 – 2:15 TThF
		9:40 – 10:55 MWF	1:00 – 2:15 MWTh		9:40 – 12:10 TTh	1:00 – 3:30 TTh
		9:40 – 12:10 MW	1:00 – 3:30 MW			
Day and Date Of Final Exam	WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 11			THURSDAY DECEMBER 12		
Time of Exam	8:00am - 10:00am	10:30am - 12:30pm	1:00pm - 3:00pm	8:00am - 10:00am	10:30am - 12:30pm	1:00pm - 3:00pm
Normal Class Schedule	8:15 – 9:25 MTWTh	11:20 – 12:30 MTWTh	2:20 – 3:30 MTWTh	8:00 – 9:25 TTh	11:20 – 12:45 TTh	1:45 – 3:10 TTh
	8:00 – 9:25 MW	11:20 – 12:45 MW	2:40 – 4:05 MW	8:00 – 9:15 TThF	11:20 – 12:35 TThF	1:45 – 3:00 TThF
	8:00 – 9:15 MWF	11:20 – 12:35 MWF		8:00 – 10:30 TTh	11:20 – 1:50 TTh	
	8:00 – 10:30 MW	11:20 – 1:50 MW				

EVENING CLASSES

CLASSES MEETING AT 3 PM OR BEFORE 5 PM			CLASSES MEETING AT 5 PM OR BEFORE 6 PM			CLASSES MEETING AT OR AFTER 6 PM		
Class Meets	Exam Date	Time	Class Meets	Exam Date	Time	Class Meets	Exam Date	Time
M	M Dec 9	4 - 6pm	M	M Dec 9	4 - 6pm	M	M Dec 9	7 - 9pm
T	T Dec 10	4 - 6pm	T	T Dec 10	4 - 6pm	T	T Dec 10	7 - 9pm
W	W Dec 11	4 - 6pm	W	W Dec 11	4 - 6pm	W	W Dec 11	7 - 9pm
Th	Th Dec 12	4 - 6pm	Th	Th Dec 12	4 - 6pm	Th	Th Dec 12	7 - 9pm
MW	M Dec 9	4 - 6pm	MW	W Dec 11	4 - 6pm	MW	M Dec 9	7 - 9pm
TTh	T Dec 10	4 - 6pm	TTh	Th Dec 12	4 - 6pm	TTh	T Dec 10	7 - 9pm

In the event of a conflict, speak with your instructor to schedule an alternate time to take the final.

thevalleystar.com

Do you have a news tip? » Send us your news tip to valleystar@lavalleystar.com or join us on Facebook.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Thoughtful student sends in his thoughts on the food truck that we all know.

GREG KALAJIAN

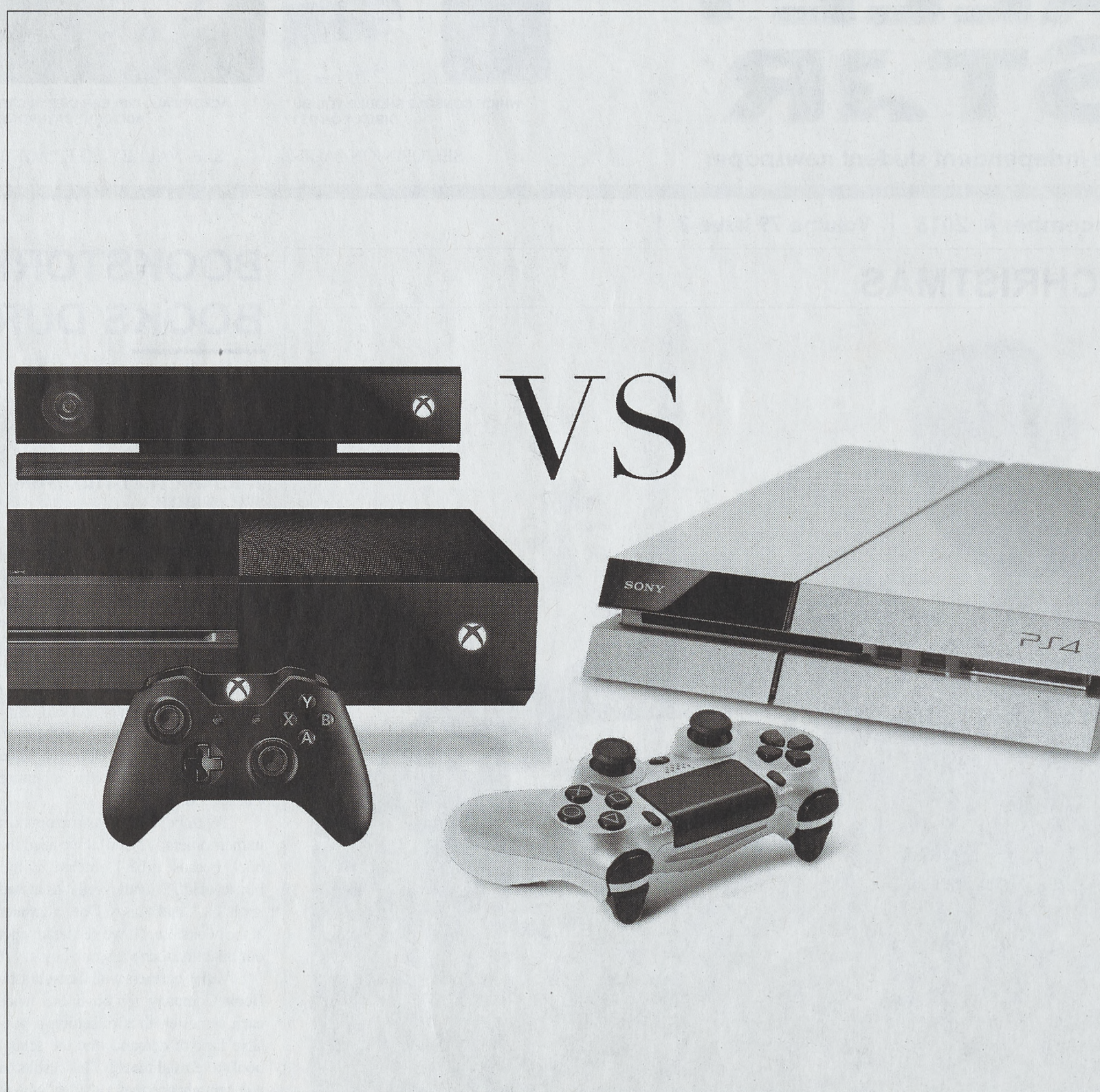
Is there a savior to the cafeteria situation? Maybe there is still another option for the students that are upset about the cafeteria being closed due to construction and the little to no variety of food on the food trucks on campus.

What could it be? Star Delivery would be a food delivery service catering to Valley college students, who want more variety while saving gas money.

A student would call and place an order to the department, which would handle the order for the school. All food chains and restaurants are available to order from, Tommy's Burgers, Bob's Big Boy, McDonald's, Burger King, Taco Bell, etc.

This would bring more jobs as well as more flavor to the school. If you're a vegetarian and don't like fast food, then you could just order from a vegetarian restaurant. The drivers could be local or non-local job lookers who could be put on payroll or still do their daily activities and work on call. The operating hours could be from morning till night.

The delivery service could accept cash, PayPal, all major credit cards and even make their own cards to put money on. Students could pay up front or after delivery is made.



WASTE OF SPACE - Xbox One and PS4 will duke it out this christmas over supremacy of your living room, neither should be anywhere near it.

ILLUSTRATION BY JAHSAUDI PERKINS, PHOTO EDITOR | VALLEY STAR

ZAIN'S BRAIN

ONE, FOUR OR NONE

This holiday season, Microsoft wants your living room and Sony wants your gaming thumbs.

ZAIN ABOURAIA

Every decade, another round of video game consoles roll around promising the moon. For veteran gamers, the promises have usually been pretty shallow and predictable: better graphics, higher capabilities, crazy specs, etc. This holiday season, however, ushers in a brave new world.

Gaming is not about playing anymore. The simple pleasure of immersing oneself into an alternate universe where they can forget their tedious, mundane reality for a few hours or entire weeks in some cases and instead kill dragons and save princesses are no longer the novelty found in games.

It used to be that all one needed to save the world and defeat the ultimate evil was a TV, an electrical outlet and the cartridge or disc of one's choice, or maybe a memory card to save progress. Now a prospective gamer needs an HDTV, an HDMI cable, a high speed internet connection, a subscription to Xbox Live or PlayStation Online, a headset, a motion and voice sensitive camera and for some, the willingness to put up with all these new changes.

Microsoft is trying to annex your living room. The Xbox One will come with Microsoft's motion sensing technology, Xbox Kinect, a camera that tracks your movement and your voice. While the Kinect camera is used to play certain games, it is primarily used to navigate the new Xbox One menu system and to control your TV. The new feature Microsoft is shouting about is the ability to connect your cable box through the console to your TV, allowing users to switch seamlessly between Grand Theft Auto and Sons Of Guns.

The PS4 has no such capabilities; users can still watch Netflix and Hulu, and they can still use Skype. The PS4 has its own motion sensing capabilities with their sensor, PlayStation Move. In general, Sony's theme with the PS4 has been focused towards "hard-core gamers" — those who just want to play their goddamn video games in peace without all the superfluous extra features.

This leaves gamers an interesting dilemma. Does one buy a giant box that will most likely complicate your entertainment center rather than simplify it? Or does one buy the slightly smaller box that is just another console? Both systems are not backwards compatible, meaning that player's collections of games from the past decade or more — collections that they have spent thousands of dollars on — are no longer playable. Both consoles have the same specifications and aesthetic, and all the good games that are coming out are available on both consoles. The only real difference is that one is \$100 more than the other. However, that is not to say there are any launch titles worth the discerning gamers attention.

The solution may be to wait. Any system bought at launch will almost certainly have hardware malfunctions; the launch games are almost never good and they will set you back a few hundred dollars.

Do not even consider the Wii U unless you have a Tri-Force tattooed to your face.

E-mail Zain Abouraia at opinion@lavalleystar.com
Send general comments to valleystar@lavalleystar.com

FOOD TRUCK BLUES

Can students be forced to eat the same food from the same truck every day

PATRICIA RIVERA
STAFF WRITER

Valley College students never got their food cravings met. Their frequent cries for a bit of a change in their food selections were never answered.

Although Valley students did not mind the options from the infamous food truck, after a while they just got over it.

The plan to add another food truck by the engineering building was never realized, so students still had to make the trek from the far side of campus just to get some thing from the same ol' food truck every day.

"I just quit eating from the food truck," said psychology major Steven Mejia. "It was good and all but I couldn't only eat it so many times."

Students do not see why

they cannot have interchangeable trucks at least every other week or so.

The food truck fad continues and yet Valley does not want to seem to jump on the bandwagon and get more food options. Students should not have to pay the price for the cafeteria being closed.

The construction happening all over campus is a cross that students have to bear, but having no other alternatives to eat just makes everything so much more depressing.

As if parking was not hard enough, having to venture off of campus to find a different pallet pleaser is still the main choice for most students. Especially since nothing has changed in regards to the same, day after day, boring Valley College food truck.

There will not be a new cafeteria until 2015 and students should not have to wait that long for a change in their daily meal menu.

STUDENT FEES GO TO NEW ORLEANS

What your student government is really spending money on.

ZAIN ABOURAIA
OPINION EDITOR

The ASU sounds like a bad MasterCard commercial: \$10,345 to a trip to Sacramento, \$2,214 for a ride to Monterey Bay and \$9,000 for an excursion to New Orleans. For students, there was no homecoming this year and the ASU spent \$70 on a new costume for the mascot.

The ASU collected \$57,936 from ASO fees and spent \$15,528 from the student rep fees. The ASU spent \$21,759 on three trips for 14 students, all expenses paid.

The ASU is in charge of representing student interests, sponsoring various clubs, departments and resources on campus, according to their website. They collect money from students through the ASO in order to help students.

They did send student Jamie Lopez on a trip to Nebraska to present a research paper and helped sponsor Latino Heritage Week.

However, by their own admission, they did a poor job in aiding clubs and helping students.

This is hardly representing the interest of the students. Students need more classes, earlier registration dates and better food. Valley students are not seeing any direct benefits from the ASU, except for those who know to ask.

The ASU will match funds from clubs that want to organize their own events and even grant students money if they have a legitimate academic reason for doing so, such as the case of Lopez. Students, clubs and departments need to apply for the money by filling out a budget-request form and then wait for the board to vote on the funds.

"That's something I do need to do a better job of," said John Reyes, ASU treasurer. "Is getting the word out there to students that this money is available to them. That's something I need to work on a lot more."

The business office closes early because they don't have money to pay employees. Student workers had to take a massive cut

for the same reason, but there are no worries there because the ASU is hard at work campaigning for their own paycheck.

"The thing that gets me mad... is they 'have the money for all of that' yet they don't have the money to keep a janitorial staff that can keep the buildings they already have up to healthy and safety standards and probably violate other major codes," said Michael Rydinsky, electrical engineering major. "Let alone the fact that the classrooms are also so dirty that you can swipe your feet on the floor and draw in the dirt. It's no wonder why students are getting sick... because they would rather give insane amounts of money to football and things that have nothing to do with the education or wellbeing of the majority of the students."

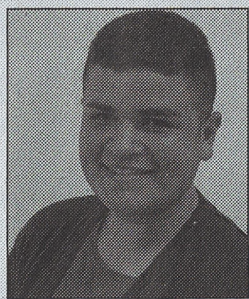
While the ASU can't pay for a janitorial staff, there are so many things they could be spending that money on: textbook waivers, scholarships or maybe a new food truck. Students pay good money to receive an education, at least enough of an education to transfer to a university, not to send 14 people to go on vacation.

VALLEY VIEW | HOW DO YOU PREPARE FOR FINALS?



"One of my professors provides lecture notes online, I print them out and study from that."

- MARLNE SANCHEZ
SOCIOLOGY



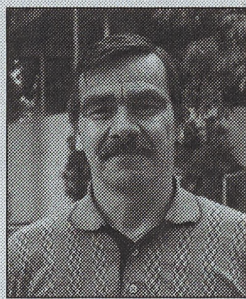
"I collect all the material that I have in class I find a place where I can find peace and feel comfortable."

- ERICK VELASQUEZ
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION



"I go over all of the stuff we have in the semester."

- ANGELA TARAKCHYAN
SOCIOLOGY



"I usually go back to all the notes given by the professor"

- THOMAS TELLEZ
BUSINESS



"Go over notes the week of and make flashcards."

- CARMEN PARRAS
BIOLOGY

PHOTOS BY SAMUEL OKSNER, PHOTO EDITOR | VALLEY STAR

VALLEY VOICES PREP FOR HOLIDAY CHEER

The LAVC Wind Ensemble performs seasonal music at the Main Stage Theater.

JHANELLE RIVERA
EDITOR IN CHIEF

Bells were ringing on Monday at the Main Stage Theater as the LAVC Wind Ensemble guided their audience into a winter wonderland through harmonious renditions of holiday classics.

Within 50 minutes, more than 30 musicians performed a medley of eight holiday segments. The orchestra appeared to be a wide variety of artist, which consisted of members from the Los Angeles community and Valley College students. Diversity spread wide across from ages and ethnicity to reciting Hanukkah and Christmas songs.

"I think its one way of showing music is for everybody, it is the universal language and we all speak it," said LAVC Wind Ensemble director, Dean Immel.

The audience's involvement helped to spread the holiday spirit. Applauses from the audience gradually grew in-between transition of songs and listeners sang along to their favorite melodies and were clapping along to the beat.

"Home For Christmas", an arrangement played to liven up the mood inside the theatre through the combination of four original Christmas pieces, "Home for the Holidays", "Winter Wonderland", "Over the River", and "I'll Be Home for Christmas". According to seven years' flautist and Monarch, Erika Perdomo, it took



SOUNDS OF CHRISTMAS- Conductor Dean Immel leads the LAVC Wind Stage Ensemble orchestra on Monday's holiday concert in LAVC Main Stage Theater.

more than a month of rehearsal. Perdomo states she adores playing Christmas music and finds it soothing.

"It's very relaxing kind of take the stress away and begin to feel all happy things," said undecided major Perdomo.

The performance alternated between Christmas and Hanukkah music. Israeli classical melody, "Bashana Haba'ah", was a dedication for the Six Day

War. Before the musicians performed "The Eighth Candle", the performers gave a contribute to Hanukkah as Jessica Yarkin, who is in the Rabbinic studies program at American Jewish University and a Rabbinic intern at Adat Ari El synagogue, lit six candles on the menorah that was onstage and recited two traditional prayers.

"The whole point of celebrating Hanukkah is that it is a

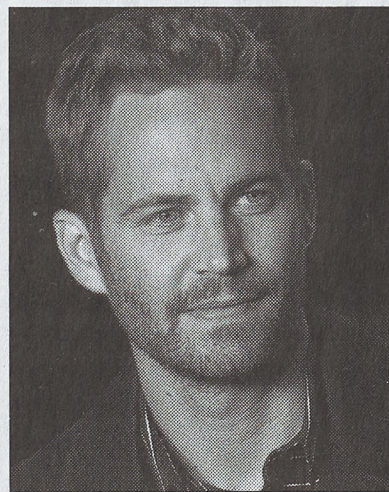
communal religion so that as many people as possible can get together and sing and light the candles together," Yarkin said. "So it's really nice to do it in a big room full of tons of people, and you heard half the audience jump in because they knew the blessings, and that really warmed my heart."

For the finale, the orchestra played the original rock and roll version of "Bashana Haba'ah".

The audience interaction did not end there. Director Immel asked for the audience's opinion on which version was more appealing. The crowd all agreed on the rock and roll version.

This is the last performance of fall semester. The next Wind Ensemble performance is scheduled for Monday, March 24, 2014 at 8:00 p.m. at the Main Stage Theater.

Paul Walker



1973-2013

STOCK PHOTO
REST IN PEACE - Fast and Furious star dies at the age of 40.

Hollywood actor Paul Walker dies in car accident this past Saturday.

CAMILA TABAR AND
PATRICIA RIVERA
STAFF WRITERS

Hollywood heartthrob and "Fast and Furious" star, Paul Walker, died in an explosive car crash, along with the CEO of Always Evolving, Roger Rodas, on Saturday, Nov. 30.

After a charity event in Santa Clarita, the two sped out of control and rammed into a pole, reported the Chicago Tribune and the Los Angeles Times. The car erupted into flames, and both of the men were killed.

According to the Chicago Tribune, Rodas' \$450,000, 2005 Porsche Carrera GT has a reputation for being difficult to drive. That, coupled with dangerous speeding, is likely what led to Saturday's fatal crash. Outside of his movies, Walker had always been a vocal car enthusiast and self-proclaimed "speed demon".

When TMZ first broke the story, this tragically ironic accident left the public confused and skeptical. Many news outlets reported that Walker was the victim of a death hoax the day before his actual accident, joining the ranks of many other celebrities, such as Kanye West.

"I was at work... we could actually smell the body. It was horrible," said Krista Wyly, a business major. "We didn't know who it was or what the smell was. It was just horrible."

People did not know if the news of his death was just a horrible coincidence or the snowballing of a tasteless joke. However, according to Just Jared, the news of this death hoax is a hoax itself—the result of an automatic eulogy generator that creates fake stories for any celebrity of your choosing. It was finally confirmed by his publicist that the action star is, indeed, dead.

Fans everywhere are swarming social media with grieving posts on the sudden loss of their handsome leading man. Friends and family of Walker have put out public statements in honor of him as well.

Walker leaves behind a 15-year-old daughter, Meadow Walker, and his longtime girlfriend, Jasmine Pilchard-Gosnell.

They ask that the public make donations to Walker's charity, Reach Out Worldwide, and pay their respects by supporting his cause. ROWW is an organization that reaches out to communities suffering in the aftermath of natural disasters.

Walker's film "Hours" will be opening in December, but shooting for "Fast & Furious 7" has been postponed indefinitely.

"I watched the first 'Fast and Furious' with my family," Wyly said. "It will be interesting to see what happens with the seventh."

X-MAS TREES PINING FOR HOMES

Santa & Sons sell Christmas trees at Valley until Christmas Eve.

LEILANI PELTZ
NEWS EDITOR

Approaching Valley College from Burbank Boulevard, people usually expect to see parking lots

filled with vehicles of students and staff who are currently in classes. For roughly the next month, a different sight is gracing Lot G. One-quarter of the student lot is filled with homegrown Christmas trees, just waiting for families to come and bring them home to decorate for the holiday.

Mark Rohlf, owner of Santa & Sons, resembles Santa himself

with his grey beard and red shirt. He first opened the business in 1983. The company is family-owned and operated and is based out of Oregon where the trees are grown.

"I'm the farmer," Rohlf said. "I grow the trees. It's a fun job, growing Christmas trees."

Valley is the only retail location for Santa & Sons, as the farm mostly deals in wholesale.

Four varieties of fir trees are sold: Noble, Nordmann, Grand, and Douglas, and each type has its own unique appearance and qualities. The company also sells wreaths and mistletoe, but Christmas trees are its specialty. Costs of the trees start at \$19.99 and go up, depending on the kind and the height.

"I've been growing trees for

over 30 years," Rohlf said. "I started with other guys in 1976 and opened my business in 1983."

Santa & Sons was located in Studio City in 1993, Sherman Oaks in 1996, and then moved to Valley in 2001. Some of their customers were born the same year that the company first came to the valley.

"A lot of the kids have been coming to us since they were babies," Rohlf said. "We've had families who have been coming to us for 20 years, and their kids have grown up coming to Santa & Sons."

Delivery to homes and businesses is available, or the employees can bring the tree out and tie it to the top of the vehicle.

The tree lot has a cozy feel to it, has a sweet, citrusy smell and

is both community and family-friendly.

"We've really gotten to know the families," Rohlf said, "and getting to see the kids again every year is the best part—no doubt about it. The joyfulness of the children is absolutely sincere."

On Dec. 7, Santa will be visiting Santa & Sons in the afternoon.

For Valley, Santa & Sons will have Student Tuesdays and offer 20 percent off to those who come in with their Valley student id card.

Santa & Sons is open seven days a week, from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., and will remain open until Dec. 24. To learn more about Santa & Sons and the stories behind each of their trees, visit the website at www.santasons.com.

THE VALLEY STAR INFO & STAFF

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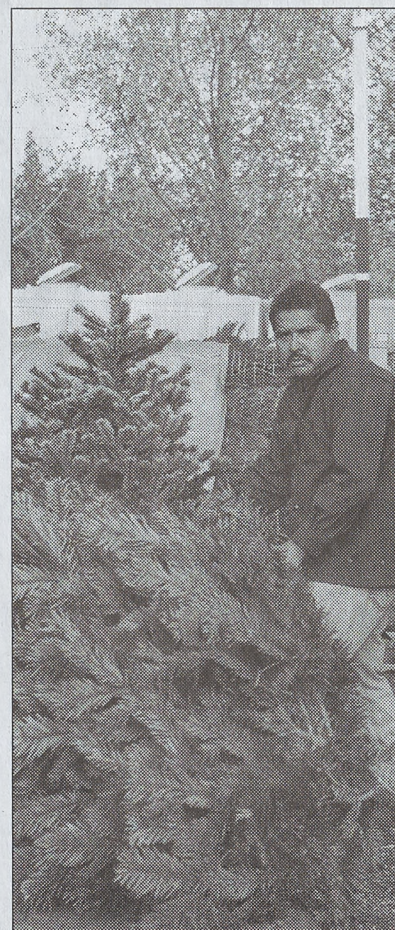
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JAHSAUDI PERKINS, PHOTO EDITOR | VALLEY STAR
OH CHRISTMAS TREE- Santa & Son's employee sanding down christmas trees.

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MONARCHS SOCCER SEASON END ON A SOUR NOTE

Lady Monarchs end the 2013 season without a trip to the playoffs.

JORGE BELON
STAFF WRITER

The 2013 season is over for the lady Monarchs, and once again Valley's soccer team finished another year without a ticket to the post season ending with a 4-9-7 record.

"We did not make the playoffs this year, but this group of girls was still able to get more wins and draws than defeats this season," coach Greg Venger said. "They are the first team to do that for Valley College in almost four seasons."

Most teams start preparing for the upcoming season eight months in advance. Venger and his assistants were hired three months before the season started, giving them little time to prepare.

"The coaches were hired late and it took us a while to get everything down," midfielder Jessica Perez said. "The communication was bad and we struggled in the beginning of the season because of the lost time."

The Lady Monarchs began the season with a three-game losing streak and a negative 10-goal differential.

"Some of the games we lost, we should of won," Venger said. "The main reason why we didn't was because in the beginning of the season we were still trying to find our identity."

Although the Monarchs finished fifth place out of eight

possible teams in the Western State South group, in the last 10-games-of the season Valley lost four games, earned two victories and tied four matches.

The green and gold scored eight goals in four of the final 10-games and were left scoreless in the other six.

"We would push the ball and create a lot of dangerous chances," Monarch midfielder Rebeca

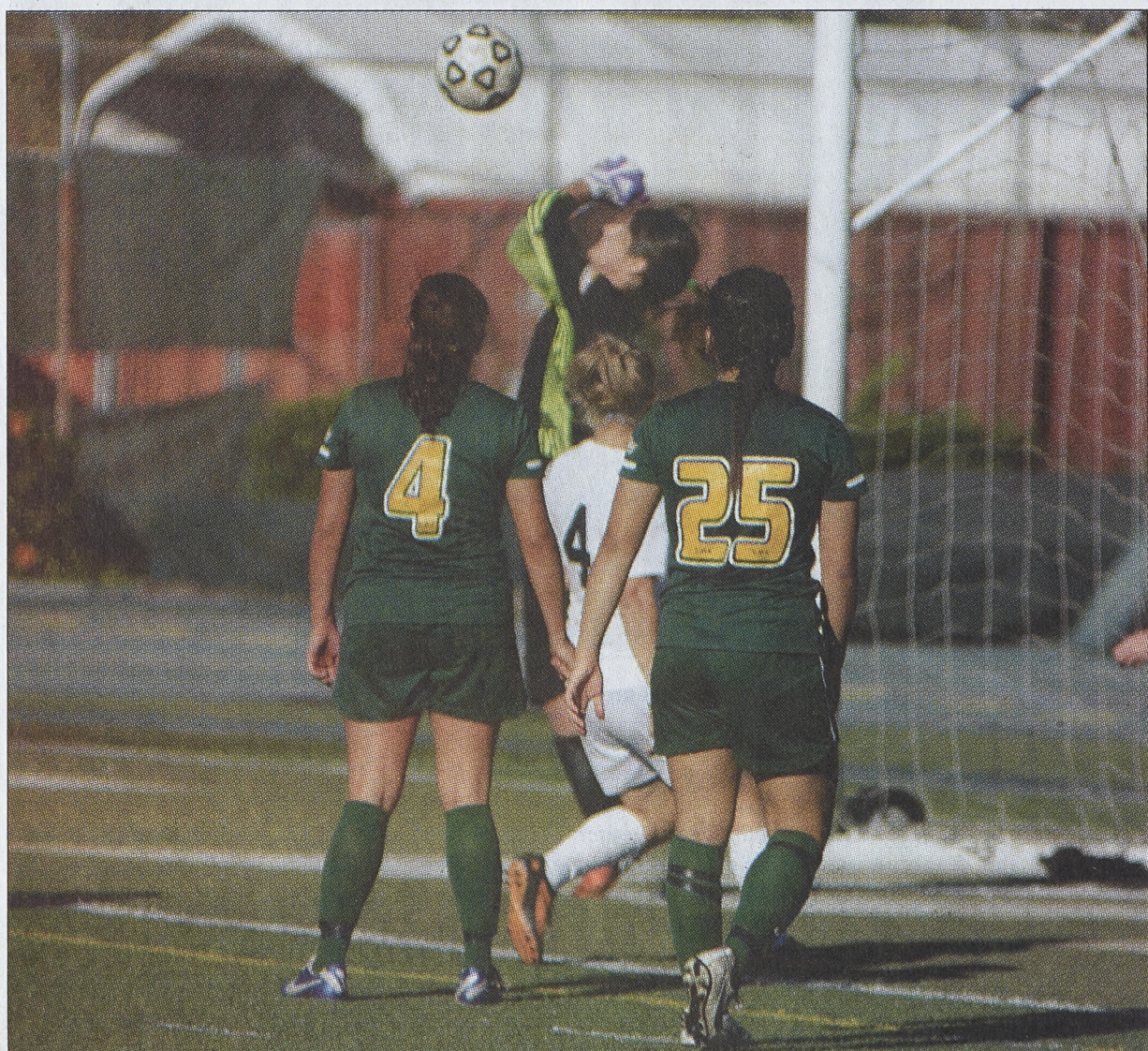
Lujan said. "But in the end no goals would come."

This season, the team had one true forward on the roster and 10 midfielders, which produced good offensive ball movement, but the finishing rate was below average with a .250 percentage of shots on target in 21-games played this season.

According to Venger, the remedy for the goal droughts is

simple. He must recruit more forwards than midfielders for next season.

"We are going have to recruit our butts off, players like Rebeca Lujan, Jessica Perez, Savannah Ajar, Neida Rendon and others leaving," Venger said. "We will need to fill their places, which will not be easy, but it has to be done."



Blocked - Monarchs goal keeper Athena Del rosario blocks a shot from the Citrus College owls.

THINK IT THROUGH

KOBE BRYANTS RICH NEW CONTRACT CAN TEAR LAKERS HEEL

ROMEO GONZALEZ

Kobe Bryant is a Laker for life. The black mamba signed away the rest of his career to the Lakers last week. But is it the best move for the team?

Bryant agreed to a \$48.5 million two-year contract that will hold up until he is two months away from his 38th birthday.

"We've said all along that our priority and hope was to have Kobe finish his career as a Laker, and this should ensure that that happens," Mitch-Kupchak Lakers general manager said in a statement. "To play 20 years in the NBA, and to do so with the same team, is unprecedented, and quite an accomplishment."

The Lakers are a franchise that has proven they are about winning championships, yet they just handed a heavy contract to a aging star who has yet proven what he can do on the court after tearing his Achilles heel.

Bryant has claimed numerous times that he wants to win. Wouldn't it be reasonable for him to take a pay cut to give the purple and gold the money they need to acquire the free agents he can use to win his sixth title?

Bryant may be worth the \$48.5 million he signed for, and he has the resume to prove it: having won five championships, becoming the greatest scorer

in Laker history, winning an Olympic gold medal, and being a 15-time all star player. But should he do whats best for the team?

The Lakers gave away about a third of their payroll to a guy who is still recovering from a torn achilles tendon and who's return this season is still unknown.

The Lakers reportedly gave Bryant the contract after seeing him do well in a couple of team scrimmages. I guess they forgot he need to prove himself in a real game.

"I was pretty surprised by the timing," NBA salary cap expert Larry Coon said to the Los Angeles Times. "I don't see any reason from the Lakers' perspective to do it now, other than to do a solid for Kobe."

We all new this season wasn't going to be the best for the Lakers, but by paying Bryant so much money it would probably benefit the team to lose a bunch of games so they could have a strong NBA draft pick.

Bryant may be one of the best players to ever play in the NBA, but sorry I don't see a reason to pay him \$48.5 million. After all how much is a black mamba worth when it's near its end?

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MONARCHS MIDFIELDER HOPES TO PLAY AT UNIVERSITY LEVEL

Valley College soccer player hopes her performance on the field can get her to the next level.

JORGE BELON
STAFF WRITER

Sophomore midfielder Rebeca Lujan led the Monarchs 2013 team with seven assists, and contributed three goals. The 21-year-old midfielder, hopes her performance on the field can send her to Kansas to continue her education and soccer career.

"Rebeca was a major part of our offensive triangle," Monarchs coach Greg Venger said. "It is going to be very hard to replace her next season."

For the Arleta native, soccer impacted her life at a very young age, as she became the first girl in her family to play competitively.

"My grandfather was a major reason why I began to play soccer," Lujan said. "He use to play in Mexico, and I wanted to be like him so I began to play at the age of five."

According to Lujan, every time she saw her grandfather they would talk about soccer and practice for hours.

Lujan played consistently every Saturday she could, but she didn't start playing on a team until her grandfather passed away.

"I began to play because I felt it would make him proud," Lujan said. "He was not here anymore and I felt by playing soccer, it was a way I could always remember him; since we both love the game so much."

She began playing at Pacoima Middle School where her talents were noticed from the coaches of the Valley United Soccer Club, and they offered her a chance to play.

"Coaches would approach my parents and me to offer me a chance to play for club level," the midfielder said. "But we could never afford the money, until one day a coach came and told my

parents that he would pay everything as long as I played."

Lujan continued to improve, but when she reached Arleta High, she found out that the Mustangs did not have a girls' soccer team.

"I was really mad about that," Lujan said. "So I began a petition to bring a girls' soccer team to Arleta, and in the 10-grade-the team was formed and I was ready to play."

Her first couple of seasons with the Mustangs were not the best, but she continued to play until she graduated in 2010.

Her freshman year at Valley, Lujan suffered a torn ACL forcing her to take two years off from playing. She did not return until this year when one of her teammate April Ortiz, convinced her

to get back on the field.

"I've always loved playing the game, but it was sad to see that the coaches in my freshmen year did not take any pride for coaching Valley," Lujan said. "But under Venger, I found myself excited to come to practice: I was not ashamed of wearing my Valley sweater around campus anymore, like I was in my freshmen year."

With the season over, Lujan wants to compete at the next level. She is the first generation in her family to attend college, and wants to be the first to graduate from a four-year university.

"I am looking towards to playing in a four-year school," Lujan said. "At the moment Coach Alex Harrison is in the process of trying to get me to Kansas to continue my soccer career."



THE CONDUCTOR - Monarch midfilder Rebeca Lujan looks down field

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